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S E C R E T COLOMBO 001408

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2015

TAGS: PARM PREL IR EU CE

SUBJECT: IRAN/IAEA: SRI LANKA ALREADY IN TOUCH WITH TEHRAN

REF: A. STATE 148169

1B. COLOMBO 1159

1C. COLOMBO 0411

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JAMES F. ENTWISTLE. REASONS 1.4 (D, H  
).

¶1. (S) Charge' called on Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar August 11 and reviewed with him Ref A talking points calling for firm IAEA action against Iran. Kadirgamar said he shared the U.S. and EU sense of urgency and said the Foreign Ministry would review the U.S. points closely with a view towards cooperating with the U.S. and EU3 on the IAEA Board.

¶2. (S) Kadirgamar told the Charge' that the Colombo EU3 heads of mission had come to see him late last week on the same subject. At their behest, Kadirgamar said he had tracked down the Iranian Foreign Minister on the telephone over the weekend in order to try to ascertain Iranian intentions. He said they "spoke at length." According to Kadirgamar, the Iranian had initially given the "classic Iranian reply" about Iran's right to develop as it saw fit, etc. When Kadirgamar pressed him about Iranian intentions, however, the Iranian admitted that recent Iranian provocations were a negotiating ploy designed to create the impression of Iranian hawkishness but that Iran remained "fully prepared to talk" with the EU3 and with IAEA Board members. Kadirgamar said he had briefed the local British High Commissioner on his call to Tehran along with his assessment that the Iranians were "jockeying for position" and that "all was not lost."

¶3. (S) Comment: As we noted in Ref C, Sri Lanka relies on Iranian concessional treatment on petroleum exports, which has limited Sri Lankan willingness to weigh in with Tehran on tough issues. That said, FM Kadirgamar is clearly engaged and willing to help resolve the current impasse. We will compare notes with our Colombo EU3 colleagues as well. End comment.

ENTWISTLE